

VISIONING ELEMENT INTRODUCTION

"To become a special City that provides its community members with an exceptional quality of life while maintaining a small hometown sense of place that is distinctly West Melbourne".

Element Purpose

Crafting a vision statement is a way of understanding and describing the desired future as envisioned by a community. "To become" and "West Melbourne will" describe how the West Melbourne community's views itself in the future and expresses the community's ideal of what it wishes to become. Supported by a commitment to achieve this vision, the City has utilized this vision to establish the Horizon 2030 planning framework. The framework's goals, objectives, and policies set forth a course of action for how the City will grow and change as it works towards fulfilling its vision.

The Vision will be used to guide decision-making and be used as the prism through which future proposals and actions will be evaluated. The following six guiding principles, as established through 2009 Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR), will be used to frame the vision's priorities:

- **Chapter 1—Community Identity and Image:** Creating a distinct community image, unique identity, and recognized City character.
- Chapter 2—Community Core, Neighborhood Centers, and Gathering Places: Uniting the
 community together through the development of a central community core, neighborhood
 centers, and gathering spaces.
- **Chapter 3—Integrated Development Patterns:** Establishing land development patterns that integrate neighborhoods, commercial areas, civic areas, and public spaces.
- Chapter 4—Community Connectivity and Multi-Modal Transportation Systems: Uniting the community through an integrated, multi-modal transportation system.
- Chapter 5—Standards for Public Facilities and Infrastructure Systems: Meeting the public services and infrastructure capacity needs for today and the future.
- Chapter 6—Land Development Practices and Design Standards: Establishing sustainable
 land development practices, traditional master planning strategies, and unifying architectural
 design standards.

The purpose of the Visioning Element is to utilize these guiding principles to form a planning framework for executing and achieving the City of West Melbourne community planning vision. The element achieves this goal by identifying six sets of objective and policies which express how the planning principals ought to be implemented through the City's future planning priorities. As a result, the visioning element makes certain the Horizon 2030 Comprehensive Plan utilizes the City's vision to guide the City of West Melbourne in its future development and service practices.



Community Vision Background

The City of West Melbourne is located in east central Florida, approximately 50 miles south of the Kennedy Space Center (see attached "City Limits" map). Community members embrace the City's small town character and home town environment. This character and environment provides the City a strong quality of life with great neighborhoods, year-round recreation opportunities, and strong public services and schools, and diverse economic opportunities.

West Melbourne was founded in 1959 to protect the community from being absorbed by larger surrounding municipalities. The community wanted to protect its independence and small hometown sense of place and did so through incorporation.

Typical of many communities built in the last 50 years, West Melbourne has a suburban development pattern typified by strip commercial corridors, separated neighborhoods, and disconnected public spaces. The community planning vision seeks to diversify this development pattern as it seeks to promote the development of traditional mixed use neighborhoods in addition to the continued viability of its existing suburban neighborhoods.

In order to achieve this vision, the City's future development strategy is to encourage redevelopment of its commercial corridors, promote new traditional neighborhood developments, and improve the integration of existing neighborhoods, public spaces, schools, and other public buildings.

The challenge for the City's future is to integrate new and redevelopment areas with existing neighborhoods and public areas so as to enhance the quality of life for the entire community. The vision's goal is to address this challenge by utilizing compatible design features to blend together the City into one unified and integrated West Melbourne.

Evaluation and Appraisal Report: Identified Concerns

West Melbourne's 2009 Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) and its six critical community issues are the cornerstone of the City's community planning vision. The EAR discussed how the City should develop in the future as it examined the relationship between its six critical issues to the City's past, current, and future planning practices and development efforts.

The Visioning Element seeks to address the EAR findings by utilizing that discussion as the basis for crafting its goals, objectives, and policies. Issues related to the City's community vision were discussed in the following chapters of the EAR:

- **Chapter 1—Community Identity and Image:** Concerns are related to how to develop West Melbourne's sense of place, with a distinct community character and identity.
- Chapter 2—Community Core, Neighborhood Centers, and Gathering Spaces: Concerns are related to how to create community space, neighborhood centers, and gathering spaces where people can interact, socialize, and share in community life.



- **Chapter 3—Integrated Development Patterns:** Concerns are related to how to facilitate the development of traditional neighborhoods and mixed use activity centers that provide the community varied live-work-play opportunities.
- Chapter 4—Community Connectivity and Multimodal Transportation Systems: Concerns are related to how to promote a community development pattern which support multi-modal, pedestrian-oriented transportation patterns and mixed-use neighborhoods.
- Chapter 5—Standards for Public Facilities and Infrastructure Systems: Concerns are related to how to manage growth and development in correlation with facility and infrastructure capacity and to provide for the safety, health, and well-being of a growing community.
- **Chapter 6—Land Development Practices and Design Standards:** Concerns are related to how to foster development and community design practices that promote the community's vision as a small town with a unique identity, well-defined image, and distinct sense of place.

As a result, the vision element ensures that the needs, concerns, and interests identified through the 2009 EAR are fully addressed through the 2010 Comprehensive Plan's planning framework.

Horizon 2030 Visioning Element Policy Foundation

As discussed in the Introduction Chapter, Horizon 2030 is a community planning effort designed to develop and achieve the City's community planning vision. Horizon 2030 is composed of two phases: the 2009 Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) and the Horizon 2030 Comprehensive Plan.

- **2009** Evaluation and Appraisal Report: Adopted in January 2009, the EAR analyzed past planning efforts and set a new planning vision for the community's future. The results of the report set forth a strategy for how to amend the 1999 Comprehensive Plan by shaping its policy alternatives and establishing a planning framework.
- **Horizon 2030 Comprehensive Plan:** This update establishes the City's future planning framework, which is based on traditional planning principals and designed to achieve the community planning vision.

Community Planning Efforts

The Horizon 2030 process has provided the community a foundation for revising the City's long range planning policies and achieving the community planning vision. The central tenant of the process has been the provision of a forum through which the community can discuss its values, current development patterns, and future vision. The result of this discussion is that the City has determined what planning policies are necessary implement the community's value and future vision.



Unlike previous comprehensive plan update processes utilized by the City of West Melbourne, Horizon 2030 was accessible and inclusive of the community's ideas, as it gave members a voice in the evaluation of past planning efforts and development of a new planning framework. In order to make it approachable to citizens, the City designed a community-focused planning process that incorporated many of the best planning practices of public participation and visioning. As discussed, this planning process included integrating community issues and comprehensive plan elements, providing multiple opportunity for public input, and enabling participants to identify both community issues and visioning priorities, developing a new planning framework, and establishing user-friendly planning documents.

Through this process the community had the opportunity to help identify and address its community issues. While there were many ideas discussed, the principal concerns that planning staff heard the community discussed dealt with the need to foster a unique community character and distinct sense of place, while supporting the City's small hometown environment. These concerns were illustrated through discussions about what the City's future development strategy ought to be for new neighborhoods, mixed-use commercial redevelopment, and existing neighborhood areas.

The 2009 EAR found that the community has concerns about what the community's character and sense of place are because such issues were not addressed in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan. In order to ensure such issues are addressed in the future, the report recommended that the City establish a new planning framework in which quality of life and community character considerations drive infrastructure and facility improvements and determine future planning strategies. Based on this new planning strategy, the 2010 Comprehensive Plan will ensure that all future developments—whether they are in new or established development areas—have the character people want associated with West Melbourne.

Vision Planning Framework Components

Through this discussion the City of West Melbourne has considered how to support a vibrant public environment while protecting the vital natural environment, foster a robust economy and provide for a unified and distinct sense of community. Specifically, the City considered how to ensure the long range planning framework implemented the stated community vision based upon the following issues:

- How land is used so that it provides people and native species a healthy natural and public environment.
- How the community, commercial, and recreational activity centers are linked together.
- How older neighborhoods mature.
- How new developments are integrated into the community.
- How redevelopment efforts address concerns related to community identity and community viability.
- How the City partners with the business sector to create a diverse and vibrant economy.
- How the City of West Melbourne relates to Brevard County and the entire Space Coast region.



In considering each of these issues, the community has evaluated previous planning efforts and current community conditions to determine the most appropriate course of action. The results of this community process are a vision for the community's future and a planning framework. The implementation of the vision and planning framework will help the City achieve its goals through future land use, development, and public service practices.

Horizon 2030 has caused the City to focus its future planning, design, and development practices on community livability and quality of life issues. Additionally, the City's planning tools integrate design, function, and structure together. As a result, West Melbourne has the comprehensive planning tools needed to achieve the vision it has for the community's future.

Community Planning Vision Principles

The successful completion of the community planning vision will ensure that the City achieves the goals set for itself through the Horizon 2030 process. The principles, as established through the 2010 Comprehensive Plan are to:

- Create a distinct community image through City gateways, unique community identity features, and recognizable character attributes.
- Provide an exceptional place to live, work, and play through traditional land use and development strategies.
- Promote residential livability that meets the community's housing needs and supports the diverse character of the City's neighborhoods.
- Provide for the infrastructure mobility needs of residents, businesses, and visitors that support a safe, secure, accessible, and efficient transportation system.
- Provide a multi-modal transportation system that supports varied transportation alternatives, improved connectivity, and enhanced quality of life.
- Provide needed public facilities in a manner that ensures protection of investments in existing facilities, supports the community planning vision, promotes sustainable development, and provides for the community's needs.
- Provide for the financial needs of a highly effective organization (the City).
- Collaborate and coordinate with the School Board of Brevard County to provide and maintain a
 high quality public education system which meets the needs of West Melbourne's existing and
 future population.
- Utilize intergovernmental partnerships to provide the community a high quality of life and adequate level of service.
- Foster West Melbourne's quality of life, well-being, and sense of place though the provision of a diverse variety of public spaces, parks and recreational resources that meet the needs of a multi-generational community.
- Foster West Melbourne's quality of life, future sustainability, and community vision by protecting, maintaining, and preserving the City's open spaces and environmental amenities.



By achieving these goals, the City of West Melbourne will successfully establish the small hometown sense of place and unique community identity it envisions for its future. In doing so, the vision element will successfully address each of the six community issues (as identified in the 2009 EAR) and ensures it becomes the community it envisions itself to be in the future.